



LIMBO;

OR

An Apology for Purgatory and Prayers for the Dead.

BEING

THE SEQUEL TO 'THE STATE OF THE BLESSED DEAD,' BY
HENRY ALFORD, D.D., DEAN OF CANTERBURY.

DEDICATED TO THE

SOCIETY 'THE HELPERS OF THE HOLY SOULS.'

BY

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Nihil obstat.

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INTRODUCTION.

No formal dedicatory epistle seems requisite for inscribing the following pages to the Society, the Helpers of the Holy Souls. The object in view of that Institute and of this treatise is identical; for whether we write or pray, our most fervent orisons refer to those who have preceded us into the great region of spirits—that region ‘from whose bourn no traveller returns.’ It is true, however, that works are far better than words; but it is also true, that words may stimulate works. When, then, words are exemplified by works, it is very certain that the most lasting impression is made on the public mind. The present age, as Mr. Disraeli truly declares, is preëminently material; indeed, it all but ignores the supernatural order. It cannot fail, notwithstanding, to be forcibly struck with what comes under the cognisance of the senses. We may utter as fine sentiments as ever were spoken by ancient or modern philosophers; but unless we are practical, and reduce our finely-spun theories to some tangible form, we are labouring in vain. We may discourse most eloquently, for example, on charity, from the pulpit or the platform; but if we leave poor suffering humanity out in the cold, and give neither food nor clothing to those who are in need, all our sympathetic orations are utter moonshine, and we are simply beating the air. Lip-service is a very cheap commodity, but it is not admissible in this utilitarian age. The world with its straightforward common sense cannot believe in it; for the test of sincerity is proof. The present times are essen-

tially practical. We influence our fellow-men not by special pleading and pompous platitudes, but by being 'up and doing'—by the irresistible cogency of action—by that unanswerable logic, which all major and minor propositions fail to supplement—by those clenching arguments which effectively tell—by those stubborn facts which cannot be controverted, facts which convince the sincere mind and lead captive the honest heart.

We are led to speak thus from the circumstance, that during the last few months there has been established in London, under the highest ecclesiastical authority, a branch of that most charitable society, the Helpers of the Holy Souls, whose special duty is to pray, suffer, and labour for the spirits departed. This beautiful organisation serves as a living palpable proof not only of the belief of the middle state, but likewise of that holy violence offered to Heaven by means of unwearied supplicating to the Throne of Grace in behalf of the poor captive souls detained in the Purgatorial prison. In our discursive disquisition we have abstained from entering upon any elaborate reasoning in regard to the teaching of holy Church: '*Ecclesia locuta est, causa finita est*'—the Church speaks, contention is ended. It may be truly said that the age of controversy has gone by; and it is but too patent that nothing remains now save the entire acceptance or utter repudiation of the whole code of revealed religion. The seamless garment of the Redeemer is no longer to be torn in shreds, as in the sixteenth century, by self-appointed gossellers. The doctrines of the Christian faith are not to be lacerated as pride or passion may indicate. The child of the legitimate Mother Church is not to be divided to satisfy the audacity of every unblushing pretender, as was once with bitter irony proposed in the days of King Solomon. Such half measures are by no means to be tolerated—compromise is out of the question. The trumpet gives no uncertain sound; each must take his side, and fall into the ranks accordingly. The great Commander of the Christian army proclaims aloud, 'He that is not for me is against me.' Either Rationalism or Catholicism—either membership with the holy ancient Roman Church or companionship with the disorganised squadrons of infidelity.

In the present religious crisis, we Teachers of the old Christian school of thought have simply to expound the truths of revealed religion as defined by the infallible Roman Church in her Councils; we have to give a straightforward exposition of her ancient doctrines; we have in consequence no words to bandy, no theories to invent, no novelties to propound, no new schools of thought to inaugurate;—all is fixed, all settled, all unchangeable. Hence do we embody the whole drift of our argument in the pithy scriptural apothegm, ‘He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.’

In reference to the subject-matter on hand, we may mention that it is recorded of the charming St. Francis de Sales, whose fascinating piety could convert when the ponderous syllogisms of Cardinal de Perron could only confute the heretics, that he was wont to say, ‘We too frequently forget our dear departed.’ After the same fashion the great Father Bourdaloue wrote: ‘Though in all ages of the Church we prayed for the dead, to our days is it reserved to sanctify ourselves for the dead.’ We, however, pilgrims of the nineteenth century, have our own tale to tell. Having visited in former days the homesteads of myriads of saints and sages on the continent of Europe; having lately travelled with so many others, if not in pilgrim guise, with staff in hand and sandals on feet, at least, be it hoped, with the pilgrim’s spirit; having journeyed on to the Sanctuary of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, in the beautiful little city of Paray Le Monial—which on our arrival at midnight we found gloriously illumined with countless tapers and torches, and literally ecstatic with devotional delight, the bells clanging, banners flying, hymns chaunting, processions moving, and all the inhabitants on the tiptoe of mediæval religious jubilee, while the moon and stars in cloudless majesty kept ward and watch over the incomparable scene—we entered, with feelings not to be expressed, the venerable church. On the morrow we visited the old monastic home, and wended our way in solemn procession through the lovely picturesque garden of the blessed Sister Margaret Mary. We listened to the pious traditions of former days, and beheld the places where the Lord held converse with His favoured child; we joined the tuneful choruses of the members of the Church,

who had congregated from many lands; and at the contemplation of a scene every way worthy of the middle ages, we hailed it as the dawn of better days for every Christian land.

No wonder, then, that, animated with the spirit of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus which a pilgrimage to Paray-le-Monial must almost necessarily inspire, we should study to sanctify ourselves not only for the dead, but likewise for the living, since there are so many calling themselves Catholics, who are to all intents and purposes spiritually dead. The Church militant, which is now in such dire tribulation, has by the authority of the infallible Roman Pontiff sanctioned this most charitable Institute for behoof of the Church suffering. It belongs, then, to the faithful in life to be mindful of their brethren who have passed through the gates of death; it belongs to them to pray—nay, were it possible, to weary Heaven with prayers—for the souls departed, that they may be released from their captivity and brought speedily to the enjoyment of the blessed vision of God. If, then, what we have written under ecclesiastical supervision should commend the ‘holy and wholesome doctrine’ to the acceptance of those that are without, and stimulate the fervour of those that are within, the pale of the Church, by promoting the spiritual refreshment of the suffering souls in Purgatory, we shall feel abundantly consoled; for we shall then have laboured in some little measure to realise the exhortation in the Book of Ecclesiasticus, ‘Restrain not thy favour from the dead.’

PRELIMINARIES.

It may not, then, be out of place to mention why the writer, having spoken the substance of this tractate, has associated with it the name of an eminent Anglican ecclesiastic. The month of November, being consecrated by the ancient Church to especial devotion towards the holy souls in Purgatory, has induced him to send to the press a treatise which was first published thirty years ago, which he wrote in defence of the doctrine which had been so gratuitously assailed, and which with little or no alteration is now reprinted.

The reason, moreover, why he has made so distinct reference to the work on the title-page was the result of fortuitous circumstances. He happened to be on his way from London to Darlington to preach at an imposing religious function, which was to take place on the opening of magnificent memorial chapel schools, built through the indefatigable energy of the zealous incumbent, Father Henry Coll, in honour of the late venerable Bishop Hogarth. Stopping at York to revisit the old Catholic minster, he approached the railway bookstall, when his eye was arrested by an elegantly-bound volume entitled *The State of the Blessed Dead*, by the Dean of Canterbury. It purported to be the eighth edition, which was sufficient evidence of its extensive circulation. The idea at once struck him that the title was very significant indeed; that the treatment of such a subject, at the present stage of public opinion, was another token of the signs of the times; that it was another indication of the onward tendency of outsiders towards the centre of unity—another evidence of the gradual development of the doctrines of the ancient Church—the growing acceptance of a belief in an intermediate state, or, to employ the Dean of Canterbury's phraseology, 'the state of the blessed dead.' At once he gave a cursory glance over the contents, and he quickly perceived that the author was groping in the dark—that he had entered on a subject which was beyond his ken—a subject with which he was not conversant, and to which, of necessity, he could do but very scant justice. 'The state of the blessed dead' obviously implies that the souls departed are either in heaven, or out of heaven. If the 'blessed dead' are in heaven, they are infinitely happy, and prayer for them is altogether unnecessary; if they are out of heaven, they must be detained in some third place, and prayers without ceasing should be made for their behoof. This alternative shows forth at once the true state of the 'blessed dead.' The question is of the *blessed*, not of the *unblessed*, dead. Now, the souls departed in the sleep of Christ must be either in heaven or not. If the latter, then they are, according to Catholic theology, in that place of purification called Purgatory, where they are cleansed from every defilement—since 'nothing defiled can enter into heaven'—and thus are they rendered fit for the beatific vision.

In truth, the existence of a middle state, which we shall afterwards prove to have been ever universally recognised, is accordant with natural and revealed religion, with the mind and heart of man, while it is a providential interposition on the part of the great Creator in regard to unfortunate creatures.

For what are the circumstances of the case—what its issues? After the fall of our first parents, the gates of heaven were shut for a period of four thousand years, till the ascension of our blessed Redeemer. During all that time men and women lived and died. Their bodies went down to the grave, and were commingled with their parent earth; but their souls went forth into the region of spirits. The wicked were consigned to the lowest hell; whereas the just, debarred from heaven, were put into that third or intermediate place, no matter by what name it may be designated, where they should be detained till the price of their redemption was paid. We speak as to facts; and against facts there is no reasoning. We speak as to accredited revelation, made manifest to men by the Church of God, and therefore true, as God Himself is true.

Take away the doctrine of a middle state, and who could hope for salvation? Take away the doctrine of Purgatory, and one must then adopt either the presumptuous Calvinistic doctrine of assurance of being of the ‘number of the elect,’ or cast to the winds the theological virtue of hope, and abandon oneself to all the horrors of a desolating despondency.

Lecky, in his *History of Rationalism*, very pointedly puts the question: ‘The necessity of such a doctrine as that of Purgatory, as a mean between heaven and hell, is manifest, as some minds, timid souls, would be tempted to despair when they thought of the eternity of punishment; and those who have no care for religion at all would only be confirmed in their indifference, regarding religion as impracticable.’

The philosophical but non-Catholic Paley gave utterance to his convictions in these remarkable words: ‘The mind of man seeks for some resource; it finds it only in conceiving that some temporary punishment after death may purify the soul from its moral pollutions, and make it at last acceptable even to a Deity infinitely pure.’ These are the words of

a profound thinker, who simply spoke his deepest convictions, although, being out of the Church, his mind was only partially illumined with the rays of Divine revelation.

Indeed, it is more than marvellous that so antagonistic a feeling to the middle state should ever have been fostered among the non-Catholics of these countries. For is not the middle state consistent with the equity as well as mercy of the Almighty? Is it not the place for the imperfect? Does it not poise the balance between the almost unavoidable infirmities of human nature and malicious malversation? Moreover, does it not hold the golden mean between the two extremes of presumption and despair? Does it not militate against the monstrous predestination of Calvin on the one hand, and the desolating despair of Cain upon the other? Besides, does it not give another well-grounded hope for a blessed eternity—another chance to the poor wayfarer to reach the happy home beyond the grave? Add to this, as has been rather facetiously said in reference to so grave a subject, one might go farther and fare worse than even to Purgatory! What, then, can be the original cause, the *origo mali*, of all this antagonism to this consoling doctrine, which ought assuredly to be welcomed rather than deprecated, which ought to be regarded as the forlorn hope to man in his fearful despondency after sin, which serves to buoy him up with holy confidence, instead of plunging the soul into the abyss of desperation? Ah, deny it or doubt who may, the truth must be spoken, which cannot possibly be gainsaid: the votaries of the pretended Reformation had an interest of too palpable a kind for denouncing the middle state as an arrant superstition. *Auri sacra fames*—the greed of gold—was the inciting cause. Obits for Masses, bequests for ecclesiastical offices, charities for distribution among the poor, the widow, and the orphan, were deposited in the treasury of the Church's hands. These sacred mortmains were to be clutched by greedy harpies, as the Church lands were to be seized by unscrupulous adventurers. Of course, it was unmitigated superstition for the pious Catholic to leave large legacies that prayers and sacrifices and alms should be offered for the refreshment of his soul. But it was no superstition, forsooth, for the godless myrmidon to pounce upon the spoils of the blessed dead, and

to carry off the sacrilegious booty for profane and family enjoyment!

With these preliminary remarks, let us proceed to the subject under consideration, simply premising, that with the best Christian feeling at our command we are desirous to fill up the gaps in the treatise so palpably left vacant by the Dean of Canterbury. We may charitably regard these blanks as the *hiatus deflendos*, attributable possibly more to misfortune than to fault. Still, we cannot shut our eyes to the grave responsibility of those who, despite every good intention,—with which, it is said, a certain place is paved,—enact not simply a dubious, but in the face of Catholic Christendom a decidedly false, part; who preach without being ‘sent;’ who teach without being ‘taught;’ who administer sacraments without ‘orders and jurisdiction;’ who imitate the ritual of the Church, and dispense the ordinances of religion as if anointed priests of the sanctuary; who appear to the lambs of Christ in ‘sheeps’ clothing,’ but, to use scriptural language, are ‘ravenous wolves;’ who present themselves to the people outwardly as ‘angels of light,’ but yet, and we say it advisedly, who are not to be ‘accounted as the ministers of Christ, nor the dispensers of the mysteries of God.’

Is it not true that the surgeon and the physician, before being admitted to practise, must produce the necessary diploma? The lawyer and the advocate, before appearing at the bar, must be recognised by the faculty. The aspirants to the army and navy must exhibit their credentials of qualification. In every department of social life due certificates are required; how much more in life which is religious? But what Divine commission can the so-called clergy, whether of the Church of England or the Kirk of Scotland, bring forward—what ecclesiastical guarantee to prove to an incredulous world that they are what they profess themselves to be? Why, the voice of Christendom, by the Church of Christendom, proclaims aloud that all the non-Catholic clergy of the British Isles are the most errant Claimants; the Church of Christendom proclaims aloud that not one single individual amongst them, from the Archbishop of Canterbury at Lambeth Palace to the humblest curate at Land’s End, and from the Moderator of the General Assembly at Edinburgh to the Free-Kirk minister

at Johnny Groat's House, has the slightest right 'to teach, to preach, or to baptise' ! Their commission is human, not divine ; their commission is from her gracious Majesty, through the Prime Minister ; their commission is not from him who alone can give it, because he is the Vicar of Jesus Christ on earth, and Successor of the Fisherman of Galilee.

But let us proceed to the statement of the case, which we hesitate not to say is perfectly impregnable. It may be assailed ; it cannot be overcome. It may, like the Church, be doomed to death ; but it is fated not to die.

Limbo, or an Apology for the Middle State.

At the outset we may be permitted to explain why we employ the word 'apology' for the vindication of the subject at issue. The ancient Fathers of the Church were described as the apologists, and therefore the defenders, of Christianity. Even Henry VIII. received from the Pope the title of Apologist, or Defender of the Faith, for writing a vindication of the seven Sacraments of the Church against Martin Luther of unhappy memory, which title, by a strange misnomer, is still engraven on the coin of the realm, albeit defender of the non-Catholic faith. We have seen the manuscript in the Vatican Library at Rome ; and we record the circumstance, which is matter of history. We, however, use the word in the patristic sense, as a vindication of the middle state. Many a glorious saint, as well as eloquent sinner, has been characterised as the *malleus hæreticorum*—the sledge-hammer of heresiarchs. We ambition not to be the formidable *malleus* ; rather let us aspire to be the lowly apologist.

Before entering upon an argument so interesting in itself and so important in its bearings, some brief explanation appears desirable. We must go back to the commencement of all creation, and begin at the very beginning. We must try to see our way, and to ascertain as well as we are able the sacred relations which subsist between the Creator and the

creature. Certain it is, the Almighty rejoiceth not in the destruction of the living. Hence it never could have entered into the designs of God's providence that man should have been made to die—that he should have been made subject to a temporal, much less eternal, death. On the contrary, it was the intention of the Great Creator that man should live for ever—that the Garden of Eden should be a field of merit for the creature, the terrestrial being a foretaste of the celestial paradise. The creature, after having accomplished the end of his creation, was to be ushered into the realms of a blissful immortality.

One thing alone could prevent the attainment of that end—one thing alone could blight those fair prospects, and exchange happiness for misery everlasting; that dismal fatal thing was sin. Yet sin did come. 'By one man sin entered into the world, and by sin death' (Rom. v. 12). Sin was the cause of ruin, and sin brought the infliction of punishment. But the sin was deliberate, the act was a rebellion against the sovereignty of the Most High. The most emphatic warning had been given against violating the divine command, 'In whatsoever day thou shalt eat of the tree of knowledge thou shalt die the death' (Gen. ii. 17). Spiritual death immediately followed the temporal—chastisement instantly followed the crime. Adam in consequence became mortal, and Adam therefore was doomed to die. The saddest change came over, shall we say, the spirit of his day-dreams;—the murkiest cloud, like the pall of death, hung over the past, present, future; Adam was overwhelmed with melancholy; Eve was bleeding at the heart's core; Paradise was converted into a howling wilderness—the house of joy was changed into the habitation of sorrow; with desolation was the whole land laid desolate. Such was the state of darkness and despair after the fall. Suddenly a ray of light shot across the horizon by the announcement of a Redeemer. The Divine Son presented Himself to the Eternal Father as a victim of atonement. He offered to become the second Adam, that the first Adam might be forgiven. This promise, however, so readily made, was not so quickly performed. Long ages were to pass by before the Saviour was to overshadow the earth; generation after generation was to come and to go before

Jesus should be born of His immaculate Mother Mary, who while He was to be the second Adam, she was to be the second Eve. Blessed be God, He did come. He took upon Himself the sins of the whole world; He purchased for all men a plentiful redemption. His coming had a retrospective, as well as a prospective, character. It had reference to all men that were ever born, and that should ever be born; so that by His infinitely precious atonement all men, without exception, can be saved.

But let us proceed to the law and the testimony; let us refer to the authorised exposition of the Church upon this point, as defined in the Canons of the celebrated Council which was anterior to that of the Vatican.

Both parts of the proposition are strictly of faith, as the Church has clearly defined in a Canon of the illustrious Council of Trent, sess. xxv.: 'The Catholic Church, instructed by the Holy Spirit, has taught in her Councils, from the sacred writings, and the ancient traditions of the Fathers, and this Synod has now recently declared, that there is a Purgatory, and that the souls there detained are helped by the suffrages of the faithful, but principally by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar.'

To demonstrate what is here advanced, let us, first of all, scan the pages of the Old Testament. We shall there find abundant evidence corroborative of our position, which necessarily presupposes the belief of a middle state. For, be it observed, and let it be constantly borne in mind, that during the period of the old law, none ascended into heaven, 'the way of the holies,' as the Apostle says, 'being not yet made open.' Christ Himself was to 'dedicate that new and living way,' and begin the entrance in His own person, and by His passion and death to unlock the gates which had been closed against Adam, and all his posterity: 'He alone was found worthy to open the seals and to read the book.' Hence the language used in the Old Testament with regard to even the best of men is, that dying, they went down *ad inferos*, or *ad infernum*—the lower hell—so that they descended not to the *grave*, which received only their bodies, but *ad inferos*, 'into hell'—the common receptacle for their souls. As exemplifying our meaning, let us bring a few instances in point.

We read, in the book of Genesis, that Jacob, while lamenting the loss of his son Joseph, whom he thought a wild beast had devoured, cried out in the bitterness of his grief, 'I will go down to my son into hell mourning.' The royal Psalmist also makes continual allusion to such a belief. In one of his Canticles he declares, 'Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell;' and in another he exclaims, 'Thou hast delivered, O Lord, my soul from the lower hell;' and again, he asks, 'Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of hell?' Now, that the hell mentioned here cannot be the abode of Satan and the wicked spirits, is indubitably certain; since it is incredible that Jacob could have supposed that the soul of his young almost infant son, Joseph, had been consigned to that dungeon. And David would neither have said, 'Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell,' had it been the hell of the damned; since out of that dreadful region there is no coming forth; nor would he have spoken of his soul's deliverance from the '*lower hell*,' unless he believed that there was a '*lowest hell*.'

St. Jerome, speaking of the Patriarchs and Prophets, says, 'If Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were in hell, who were in the kingdom of heaven?' Again, he writes, 'Before the coming of Christ, Abraham was in hell; after His coming, the thief was in Paradise.' Lest it, then, might be urged that Lazarus, being in Abraham's bosom, beheld the rich glutton afar off in hell, and that therefore both Abraham and Lazarus seem to have been in heaven, the same holy Doctor dilutes entirely the difficulty by observing, that these also were in hell, but in a place of rest and refreshment; and therefore at an immense distance from the wretched glutton who lay in torments in the lowest hell—the hell of the damned. To elude this distinction of '*lower*' and '*lowest*' hell, which savoured not a little of a middle state, and was therefore auxiliary in sustaining the Catholic dogma of Purgatory, the so-called Reformers did not scruple to destroy the native force of the original by a shamefully incorrect translation. Hence, in the Reformed Bibles, printed in the years 1562, 1577, and 1579, whenever the Hebrew word SHEOL, the Greek *ᾗδης* of the Septuagint, and the '*Infernus*' of the Latin Vulgate, appeared to favour the doctrine of Purgatory, these words were rendered into English by 'grave,' regardless of the

absurdity which necessarily follows from such a translation. Thus, in the Reformed Bible, Jacob is made to say, 'I will go down into the *grave* unto my son,'—as if the holy Patriarch believed that his son Joseph had been buried in a *grave*, when, on the contrary, he declared, 'It is my son's coat, an evil wild beast hath *eaten* him, a beast hath *devoured* Joseph.' The Catholic translation is in conformity with the original, 'I will go down to my son in *hell*.' In the same manner, wherever the word 'hell' occurs, meaning the place, '*Limbus Patrum*,' where the holy Fathers of the old law reposed previous to the coming of the Redeemer, it is rendered 'grave,'—a word wholly at variance with the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin expression. No plea can be advanced as palliative of this violent distortion of the sacred text, except that of a wretched dishonesty; the true and only genuine translation would not tally with their *reforming* propensities, and hence the sacred text was to be corrupted, to suit their new schools of thought.

Moreover, there is a passage in the Book of Ecclesiasticus which seems to harmonise with our ideas of a middle state. In chap. vii. v. 37, we read, 'And restrain not thy favour from the dead.' Now, we may be permitted to ask, what favour is this, which can be conferred upon the dead? It is to no purpose, in good sooth, to praise them—it is no favour to erect a monument to eternise their memory, since they receive no possible advantage—the only favour is the suffrages which the living offer up in their behalf. The learned commentator, Estius, in his *Scriptural Annotations*, explains the citation in this sense, and gives it as a probable opinion that Ecclesiasticus recommended prayers and oblations for the dead—a practice very prevalent among the Jews, in opposition to the heresy of the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection. It would appear that Ecclesiasticus was contemporary with the Maccabees, and the writings of the latter serve to throw an additional light upon the passage in question, thereby corroborating this interpretation. Now, no argument could possibly be more luminous, or cogent, in attesting the Catholic dogma of a middle state, than what is derived from the second book of the Maccabees. We there read that the valiant Judas Maccabeus, 'making a gathering,

sent twelve thousand drachms of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead, thinking well and religiously concerning the resurrection. . . . It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins.' Here is an unquestionable proof of the practice of praying for the dead, under the old law, by God's chosen people. From this extract, we have the most minute and circumstantial evidence that the custom of praying for the dead obtained among the Jews for more than a century and a half anterior to the coming of our blessed Saviour; that such a custom was not confined to any particular sect, but was practised by the whole Jewish nation, being observed by the people as well as by the priesthood—an especial sacrifice being appointed for that purpose to be offered up in the temple of Jerusalem; and, finally, that this sacrifice, and these supplications, were expiatory, since the end for which they were instituted was, that *the dead might be loosed from their sins*. The Jews therefore believed, as is obvious from their practice, that the dead could be succoured by the prayers of the living, and, to use their own language, 'be loosed from their sins.'

So irrefragably strong was the argument, deducible from these words, in favour of the Catholic doctrine of a middle state, that our modern religionists, finding every expedient unavailing to elude their force, have resorted to the last extremity by denying the canonicity of the book itself! But most unwarrantably have they done so; for this book is ranked among the Canonical Scriptures by the Apostolical Constitutions, by Tertullian, St. Cyprian, St. Hilary, St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, the Third Council of Carthage—held anno 253—not to speak of the more recent general Councils of Florence and Trent. Besides, it stands upon the same groundwork of Canonicity as the other Books of Scripture. Its authenticity is guaranteed by the Catholic Church, and it is alone upon the authority of the Holy Ancient Church that the authenticity of all Scripture is guaranteed. But prescinding entirely from the question of its canonicity, it must, at least, in candour be admitted, that it contains wholesome and edifying doctrine; for in the Sixth of the Thirty-nine Articles, the Church of England doth read it, for example of life and instruction of manners.



